What role does sustainability play in food-processing occupations?

The processes of producing, processing and consuming food have a substantial influence on the sustainable development of our society. For example, the consumption of regional and seasonal food can lead to a reduction of emissions. The fair production of raw materials can also support social equality on a global scale. Moreover, waste reduction plays a key role in the production of sustainable food, also from an economic point of view.

To achieve this, experts in artisanal food production and food industry occupations need sustainability-oriented professional skills. These skills can be fostered by vocational education and training. For example, bakers and milk technologists can pass on the sustainability potential of their respective occupations to the next generation in training.

Some trends and competence requirements relevant to sustainability are described below for two sample occupations in the food sector. In addition, possible connections to the framework training plan are provided. The information presented is based on the results of pilot projects carried out within the scope of the funding focus “Vocational education and training for sustainable development” (Funding Line III) and its scientific supervision (Münster University of Applied Sciences/University of Hamburg).
More and more trends are emerging in the area of sustainable nutrition. These trends have a particular impact on occupations in artisanal food production and the food industry. To pick up on these trends, while at the same time playing a role in shaping sustainable nutrition, all employees in this sector need sustainability-oriented skills. The potential that is already available in the respective occupations should be used.

The occupational profile items from the framework training plans provide orientation for potential connections to promote sustainability-oriented skills. Related occupations may also benefit from these ideas.

"Bread is our staple food. As a large-scale bakery, we are committed towards our customers and to a sustainable approach in all our operations along the value chain. In training units our trainees learn where and how to contribute, for example by not wasting any water, electricity or raw materials."

Benjamin Riewesell, personnel officer
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